

PLACES OF OUR OWN, SPACES OF OUR OWN: A LOOK AT THE NATIONAL
MUSEUM OF MEXICAN ART AND THE NATIONAL
HISPANIC CULTURAL CENTER

By

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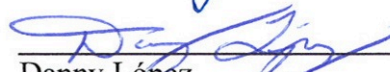
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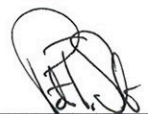
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DEDICATION

This research study is dedicated to the numerous ethnic/cultural specific museums that effectively and truly work alongside the communities they represent.

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ABSTRACT

The Hispano/Latino population in the United States of America tripled from an estimated population of 14.8 million in 1980 to more than 50.5 million in 2010. Despite their growth and presence throughout the country, the evident underrepresentation of Hispano/Latino artists, staff, board members and visitors in mainstream museums is of concern. This research explores the value and importance of the National Museum of Mexican Art (Chicago, IL) and the National Hispanic Cultural Center (Albuquerque, NM) from the perspective of their staff and the implications of their experiences to the potential establishment of the Smithsonian American Latino Museum.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Museums in the United States of America were founded with the premise of education (AAM 1984, 55) and the “enlightenment of the general public” (Moreno 2004, 510). “Every country and every community needs to know about its past [in order] to help it make sense of the present” (DCMS 2005, 11). It is not an easy job museums are called to do, “to exhibit the nation in an inclusive way . . . and reconcile different ideas as to how the nation should present” (Watson 2007, 7) itself. For that reason museums and their collections play a role in exhibiting the events and values that have shaped society. Hence, institutions allow participants to “reflect on their place in the world, their identity, their differences and similarities” (DCMS 2005, 11) with other cultures.

The challenge in the museum sector is the exclusion of various ethnic groups’ contributions to American history and culture. Institutions may claim to be inclusive and represent diversity in their collections but they tend to live in a “contradiction as their celebration of cultural pluralism does not extend to their internal hierarchies” (Gaither 1992, 58) and audiences. If museums want to remain relevant in society, then underrepresented groups must become fully integrated into the functions of the museum since its staff, trustees, audiences, exhibitions and programming are not always reflective of the cultural diversity found throughout the country.

Mainstream art museums have been primarily concerned with the preservation of art and amassing huge art collections. The collections tend to represent what curators deem as “high” art, a result from the Western canon and the development of high culture used to determine what constitutes art. As a consequence, when Hispano/Latino art is displayed in mainstream museums it is often portrayed as ‘folk’ or ‘craft.’ “It is patronizing to believe that all ethnic art and heritage represents lower culture” (Smithsonian Institution 2001, 34). Museums cannot assume that all ethnic art is folk, craft or of popular traditions (34).

Over the past 40 years, ethnic/cultural specific museums developed from the struggle over artistic and cultural representation in mainstream institutions (Luby 2011). Institutions like the National Museum of Mexican Art (hereafter NMMA) in Chicago, Illinois and the National Hispanic Cultural Center (hereafter NHCC) in Albuquerque, New Mexico emerged because artists, activists and community leaders were tired of being ignored and misunderstood. The Hispano/Latino community fought for a space to tell their stories and exhibit their diverse culture from their perspective. The researcher’s objective is to investigate the importance and value of NMMA and NHCC as seen by their staff and the implications of their experiences to the potential establishment of the Smithsonian American Latino Museum.

Statement of Problem

Museums often strive to be inclusive institutions through their collections, exhibitions and programming. However, the disparity between museum participation and the diverse American population is of concern. The Center for the Future of Museums

found only 9% of core museum visitors and approximately 20% of museum employees to be minorities (AAM 2008, 7). The Hispano/Latino population in the United States of America tripled from an estimated population of 14.8 million in 1980 (Bergard and Klein 2010, 63) to more than 50.5 million in 2010 (Pew Hispanic Center 2011). Despite their growth and presence throughout the country, the evident underrepresentation of Hispano/Latino artists, staff, and audience members in mainstream museums is alarming. Accordingly, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) 2008 “Survey of Public Participation in the Arts” revealed that Hispano/Latinos only accounted for 8.6% of museum visitors. Based on the 2008 Hispano/Latino population (see table 1) and the participation percentage, it can be concluded that about 3.9 million Hispano/Latinos were active participants in the arts but what about the remaining 41.5 million Hispano/Latinos that are missed by museums? Museums have responded by implementing outreach programs to reach underrepresented and underserved communities. However, such programs are not vested in a complete approach since they tend to be short in length rather than over time.

Purpose of the Study

Ethnic/cultural specific institutions developed to contribute to the discourse of American society due to the under and misrepresentation of ethnic groups fundamental to the U.S. Such institutions did not develop to undermine the work of mainstream institutions; rather they challenge the traditional museological approach. Institutions like NMMA and NHCC are well vested in the community as they developed directly from the communities they serve. Ethnic specific organizations have proven success in placing the

community at the core of their missions without challenging their administrative, artistic and governing structures (Luby 2011).

Studies have found that ethnic/cultural specific organizations successfully serve and engage underserved minority communities. What enables such organizations to reach the communities mainstream museums have not? What approach are ethnic/cultural institutions like NMMA and NHCC implementing in order to successfully engage the Hispano/Latino community?

Numerous organizations dedicated to the preservation and presentation of Hispano/Latino culture have yet to be interviewed in order to document their history, stories and contributions to the communities they serve. Thus, it is important to document the work of NMMA and NHCC in order to interpret their value to the Hispano/Latino communities at a national level.

The purpose of this study is to explore the importance and value of NMMA and NHCC to the Hispano/Latino communities as perceived by its staff members. The use of the phenomenological research approach will illuminate and identify the opportunities, challenges and practices used by NMMA and NHCC to engage the communities they serve. The goal of the study is to shed some light on the important work being done at a community level by national institutions. This research is supplemented by existing data obtained from print and electronic sources.

Research Questions

This research is guided by three main questions:

1. The importance and need of ethnic/cultural specific museums;

2. The contributions of NMMA and NHCC to the Hispano/Latino communities;
3. NMMA and NHCC's connection to potential establishment the Smithsonian American Latino Museum.

Significance to the Field

This research will contribute to the understanding of opportunities and challenges faced by arts organizations devoted to Hispano/Latino heritage as they seek to make sense of their place in the community. Numerous arts and cultural institutions dedicated to Hispano/Latino culture have yet to be interviewed. Therefore, it is important that their stories be told because not all arts and cultural institutions are solely interested in amassing huge art collections nor were they founded primarily to benefit tourism or economic regeneration.

Definitions

The researcher will use various terms throughout the study. The terms will be defined in the context they are to be understood. The researcher will use the terms museum, institution, and organization interchangeably.

Often used interchangeably, the terms Hispanic and Latino carry certain implications. An individual identifying him/herself as a Hispanic is an individual with white Iberian Peninsula – Spain and Portugal – origins (Fears 2003). The term Hispanic was given prominence during the Nixon administration and it has since become part of federal, state, employment and census forms amongst other official documents (2003). On the contrary, a Latino/a is a descendent from “the indigenous Indians of the Americas south of the United States and in the Caribbean conquered by Spain” (2003). Hispanic

and Latino is an ethnic category in which a person can be of any race. The researcher will use Hispano/Latino to include both ethnic categories. However, a distinction will be made when necessary.

The term community may be defined as a group in society that shares common interest, language and activities (DeCarli 2004, 20). When the researcher states 'community' she is referring to the community that has been often overlooked by mainstream institutions; for instance, it can be the Hispano/Latino community, African-American community, low- income white community, etc. Dr. Rhiannon Mason poses six ways to understand the concept of community (Watson 2007, 4), which serves as starting point when defining it:

1. Communities defined by shared historical or cultural experiences
2. Communities defined by their specialized knowledge
3. Communities defined by demographic/socioeconomic factors
4. Communities defined by identities
5. Communities defined by their visiting experience
6. Communities defined by their exclusion from other communities.
7. Communities defined by an agreed interest (Crooke 2006, 72)
8. Communities defined by geographical space

Defining a community is challenging but museums must be able to define the community they serve in order to effectively cultivate a relationship and meet the needs of such community.

Limitations

The qualitative research study consists of staff interviews and site visits. The findings will provide information based on the perceptions and beliefs of the interviewees. During the interviews, the researcher's presence may have resulted in bias responses. The sample size at each facility was small thus the findings could have had more depth given the opportunity to meet with every staff member. Due to schedule conflicts, the researcher was only able to meet with few key staff members.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Museums are unique entities as they have the opportunity to fulfill different roles in society. They have the ability to be at the center of discussing national identity while celebrating cultural pluralism. For that reason, several museums have altered their programming and exhibitions by rejecting the idea of aesthetic quality – which has been used to dismiss other cultural practices – in hopes of becoming pluralistic institutions (Munson 1997, 60). However, museums have not successfully engaged or represented diverse audiences.

The literature review is divided into five sections. The first two sections will address the research related to museum visitorship. Current museum visitor demographics illustrate the evident contradiction between museum participation and the diverse American population. The third section will focus on Abraham Maslow's "Hierarchy of Needs" theory, which argues that basic human needs – i.e., food, shelter, etc. – will be fulfilled before reaching social needs such as love, recognition and status. In addition, market research has focused on the museum 'experience' of visitors. Nonetheless, if museums are not fulfilling the 'needs' of its visitors and providing various types of museum 'experiences' then reaching a diverse population may be unsuccessful. The fourth section will discuss the relationship between art institutions and the community from a historical context. The role of museums in society has long been

challenged since post World War II. The social unrest of the 1960's and 1970's asked museums to reevaluate their purpose in society, and in 1972 the International Council of Museums' roundtable in Santiago, Chile declared "museums to be a powerful force for human development and places where the public can look for the meaning of the world around them" (Koster 2006). The last section will detail the emergence of ethnic/cultural specific institutions in response to the issues addressed in previous four sections.

Museum Visitors: Current Demographics

When the National Endowment for the Arts published the 2008 "Survey of Public Participation in the Arts," the museum sector was reminded of the continued decrease of Hispano/Latino museum participation. The report made two important observations; 1) museum audience participation steadily decreased from 17.5% in 1992 to 14.5% in 2008 and 2) Hispano/Latinos only accounted for 8.6% of museum visitors.

Table 1. Hispano/Latino Population of the United States of America 1980-2010

Year	Total Population (in the millions)	Hispano/Latino Population	Hispano/Latino as % of Total population
1980	227.0	14,832,229	6.5%
1990	248.1	20,958,680	8.4%
2000	281.4	35,336,969	12.6%
2008	301.2	45,432,158	15.1%
2010	308.7	50,478,000	16.3%

Sources: For 1980, 1990, 2000, 2005, PUMS data released by the U.S. Census Bureau (Bergard and Klein 2010, 64); 2008 data released by the U.S. Census Bureau "American Community Survey" (Farrell et al. 2010, 9); 2010 data released by the U.S. Census Bureau (Pew Hispanic Center 2011).

Detailed in table 1, the 2008 U.S. Census reported an estimated Hispano/Latino population of 45.4 million. How is it possible that Hispano/Latinos only represented 8.6% of museum visitors?

Carlos Tortolero, President and Founder of the NMMA, regarded the demographical changes of the country as history by asserting:

This is what makes the issue of inclusiveness such a challenge to mainstream arts institutions. I go to conferences and hear someone say, “Our country’s demographics are changing.” They say it like they’re Columbus and they think they have discovered something that nobody else knows. Meanwhile, like Columbus, they have no understanding that they haven’t discovered anything! How do you tell the millions of indigenous people in the Americas when Columbus arrived that they were discovered? Maybe museums should send out a press release telling the 98 million people of color in the U.S. (2005 census data) that they have just been discovered . . . Our country’s demographics changed a long time ago (Tortolero 2007).

Museums can no longer afford to remain dormant to demographical changes. The Center for the Future of Museums’ “Demographic Transformation and the Future of Museums” study predicted that by 2050 the Hispano/Latino community will comprise 30% of the U.S. population. The prediction should be of concern to museums since Hispano/Latinos are not active arts and cultural participants in comparison to other ethnic/racial groups.

Museums have long been associated with privileged groups in society since museum visitorship has been correlated with the educated and wealthy. Accordingly, the NEA’s 2008 “Arts Participation” study found higher education attainment as a predictor for potential museum visitors. Approximately 54% of museum visitors had a college or graduate degree while 5% possessed a grade school or some high school education. The findings further reinforce the notion of needing a formal education in order to visit a museum.

The elimination of arts education from the public school curriculum has directly affected underrepresented communities. Children and youth that would normally engage in artistic experiences no longer have access to the creative outlets provided in schools because they have been termed unnecessary or of leisure. “If 5 to 9 is the critical age for converting children to lifelong museumgoers and advocates, how can museums attract minority children in this age range to whose support they want in 2034?” (AAM 2008, 7).

The age composition of museum visitors should be in the radar of museum administrators. Approximately 41% of museum visitors represented ages 35 to 54, and ages 18 to 24 represented 12.9% of museum visitors. Cultivating younger audiences in the arts sector is not a new notion. Museums, symphonies, and theaters amongst other arts organizations have struggled to attract and retain younger audiences. Arts organizations need to cultivate their future audiences now, however they should not lose sight of their current audiences. Completely altering exhibitions and programming to reach younger audiences is not the solution, as organizations do not want to displace the interests of their current loyal audience base.

Often overlooked is the socio-economic composition of museum audiences. Individuals with annual incomes between \$50k and \$75k represented 20.6% of museum visitors while 51.9% of museum visitors represented annual income levels greater than \$150k. In 2008, the average U.S. median household income was \$50k. The evident gap between museum participation based on annual income levels further reinforces the notion of museums as elitist institutions. The NEA’s study revealed that the overall racial, ethnic, socio-economic and age percentage of museum visitors is not reflective of the U.S. population. Museums are often seen as “places of dialogue, advocates of

inclusion and incubators of community” (Crooke 2006, 78); for those reasons institutions’ exhibitions, programming and internal governing structures should be reflective of the country’s diverse ethnic and racial composition.

Museum Visitors: Hispano/Latino Community

Research has identified several reasons for individuals’ disinterest in museums including lack of specialized knowledge in the subject matter (Farrell et al. 2010, 13), perception of museums as exclusive institutions (13), lack of relevant materials, and no strong tradition of museumgoing (13). To assume that all Hispano/Latino audiences will respond similarly to a specific advertisement or program is a lost battle (Smithsonian Institution 2001, 13). A museum cannot simply aspire to reach such community without segmenting the target audience within the community. For instance, does the institution want to reach the Spanish speaking Hispano/Latino community, Portuguese speaking Hispano/Latino community, recent immigrant Hispano/Latino community, 1st, 2nd, or 3rd generation Hispano/Latinos.

Salvador Acevedo, museum audience researcher, believes that museums must learn the needs and values of the Hispano/Latino community in order to successfully cultivate a relationship. He suggests museums should segment Hispano/Latinos into three categories: 1) un-aculturated or recent immigrant, 2) acculturated or bicultural, and 3) assimilated. Acevedo summarized:

Acculturated and English dominant Latinos feel more comfortable with the museum experience (from getting information in English prior to their visit to interacting with exhibitions and museum staff), whereas less acculturated and Spanish-dominant Latinos are more inclined to desire/demand communications in Spanish and Latino staff (Acevedo 2010).

However, a problem arises when segments are kept just as that ‘segments’ and are not integrated into the larger museum audience base.

Based on the 2009 American Community Survey, the Pew Hispanic Center tabulated that 34% of Hispano/Latinos only spoke English at home in the 5 – 17 age group and 20.2% only spoke English in the 18 – older age group. How are museums reaching the generations of Hispano/Latinos that do not speak Spanish? Advertising with the local Spanish newspaper and television networks is no longer a solution. Institutions may reach the target audiences by looking at existing networks in the community – i.e., places of worship, civic organizations, nonprofits, social services, local businesses – or they may create advisory committees comprised of community leaders that will help channel the interests and needs of the community (Smithsonian Institution 2001, 25-26).

Demographic information only provides a snapshot of the typical museum visitor; therefore museums should not solely base their audience development initiatives on demographics. Accordingly, the data will help predict future audiences but it will not reveal why the visitors entered the museum and to what end. Institutions are advised to find the values and needs of the community in order to successfully reach the desired audience.

Acevedo’s Latino Museum Experience¹ study found that 70% of the Hispano/Latino participants attended museums primarily to learn something new. Ethnic audiences are driven by special events, programs or exhibitions rather than casually visiting a museum. “Hispano/Latinos define educational opportunities as community

¹ Acevedo has only released the first set of findings from the study of the Latino Museum Experience; the study remains in the research process.

centered, participatory and based on self-directed experiences” (Acevedo 2010). The study also found three challenges for museums including; 1) lack of bilingual signage, labels and staff, 2) exclusion of the Hispano/Latino experience in the U.S., and 3) respondents resented being treated as if they were only interested in Hispano/Latino subject or topics. Museums tend to invite Hispano/Latinos to special events programming – i.e., Hispanic Heritage Month – but are not invited again to other events.

James Chung’s 2010 National Museum-Going Household research, studied 40,000 households of which 5% were Hispano/Latino families. The study summarized the following:

- Hispano/Latino families are more likely to say they attended a museum for the sake of their children’s learning. They are also less likely to choose family time as a reason. However, according to a Pew Hispanic Center/Kaiser Family Foundation survey, 89% of Hispano/Latinos believe that relatives are more important than friends (Bernstein 2007, 45). The results indicate that arts organizations could effectively reach out by promoting family oriented programming, pricing and scheduling (45).
- Hispano/Latinos are most likely to cut back on museum visits during an economic downturn. Museums that charge admission tend to offer free days in order to reach diverse audiences. Yet, institutions that are free still face the economic costs associated with visiting the institution. For instance, a family may not have to pay admission but the costs such as parking, gasoline, meals, public transportation, etc. are considered.

- Hispano/Latinos are more likely to visit Natural History Museums, Science Centers, Zoos and Aquariums and Children's Museums. Thus, this finding correlates with Acevedo's finding that Hispano/Latinos visit museums primarily to learn something new. Individuals expect to learn something new at a history or science museum, and know what to expect when visiting a zoo. However, an individual may not know what to expect from an art museum visit, especially if he/she has never visited before and believes that a formal education is needed to understand art.

Since education is a factor linked with arts attendance, it is important to note the college enrollment statistics among Hispano/Latinos. According to the Pew Hispanic Center tabulations based on the 2009 American Community Survey, 3.3 million Hispano/Latinos received at least a bachelor's degree; 1.6 million Hispano/Latinos in the age group 18 – 24 and 1.1 million in the age group 25 – older were enrolled in college. Such findings question how museums intend to engage the growing population of college educated Hispano/Latinos.

Museum Visitors: Needs and Experience

Psychology theorist Abraham Maslow studied human curiosity and the needs of humans. Maslow's hierarchy of needs is normally portrayed in the shape of a pyramid, with the fundamental needs at the bottom to the self-actualization needs at the top. His study continues to be important in the arts field because Maslow's theory argues that people will fulfill their basic needs before they satisfy the higher-level needs – where the arts tend to be placed – as detailed in figure 1. "The system is based on the assumption

that only unmet needs act as motivators” (Byrnes 2009, 237). For instance, the person seeking to fulfill a social need may be motivated to visit a museum. However, Maslow’s theory does not take into consideration cultural differences and the fact that individual’s needs change over time (237). For those reasons, arts organizations are advised to remain informed about the needs of the communities they serve. Museums have the opportunity to fulfill the safety, social, esteem and self-actualization needs by linking the individuals’ need with the museum’s mission and programming.

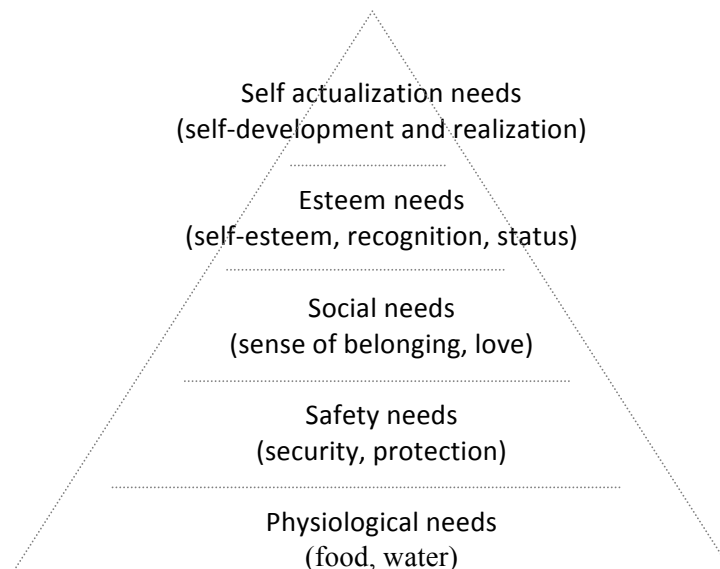


Figure 1. Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs (1954)

Reaching a broad audience and fulfilling their needs is important but the museum experience is equally important in order to retain such audience. Researchers Jacob Beard and Ragheb Mounir (Falk 2009, 159), and Kotler and Kotler (Kotler and Kotler 1998, 35) identified six areas perceived as museum experiences detailed in table 2. The experience correlates with the personal needs a person is looking to fulfill. Research has proven that

a good experience is likely to determine if the visitor returns to the museum rather than the art form or subject matter exhibited. Thus a positive museum experience from the moment of entering to departing the museum is necessary to develop and maintain a solid audience base.

Table 2. Six Types of Museum Experiences

Beard and Mounir (1983)	Experience	Kotler and Kotler (1998)
Psychological	Sense of freedom, enjoyment, honoring, sharing	Celebrative
Educational	Knowledge gain	Learning Experience
Social	Participating with others	Sociability
Relaxation	Relief from stress	Recreation
Physiological	Health, uplift, well being	Enchanting
Aesthetic	Pleasing, beauty	Aesthetic

Research has also found the relationship between the viewer and the exhibited subject matter to be of importance. Individuals want to see their experiences reflected in museums. “Communities can feel that museums are not relevant to them if they do not find within them a sense of their own history and identity” (Watson 2007, 10). Hence, ‘relevancy’ is a key factor determining the active participation of museum visitors. People desire to make a connection with the subject matter and their personal experiences.

Museum meets Community

The current conversation in the museum sector regarding community engagement and narrowing the gap between art experiences and daily life is not a new notion.

Extending art accessibility and participation to the community dates back to the 1930's. Established under President Franklin Roosevelt's administration, the New Deal consisted of a series of economic programs that included the Works Progress Administration (WPA). WPA employed millions of unskilled workers to carry out public projects. The visual arts arm of WPA was the Federal Arts Project (FAP). Designed to create jobs for unemployed artists, FAP employed more than 5,000 artists (Gibson 2002, 281) including Hispano/Latino artists of the time. Art created under FAP was characterized as "art for the people" (281). "The art depicted the life of the 'people' participating in the reconstruction of the nation" (281-282). Director of FAP, Holger Cahill declared in its 1935 operating manual:

Through employment of creative artists it is hoped – through art teaching and recreational activities – to create a broader national art consciousness and work out constructive ways of using leisure time through services in applied art to aid various campaigns of social value. The aim of the project will be to work toward an integration of the arts with the daily life of the community (Gibson 2002, 281).

Despite the criticism, FAP proved success through its arts education programming. The "project emphasized nationalism and the rediscovery of America ... since it maintained more than 100 community centers, managed art programs, and held art exhibitions of works produced by children and adults" (Wilkinson 2011). Nonetheless, the beginning of World War II shifted the government's priorities and FAP came to an end.

The idea of accessibility, participation and representation was revisited once again in the 1960's and 1970's. Organized movements like the Civil Rights and Chicano Rights movements questioned the status quo (Cohen-Cruz 2011). As a result, museums were encouraged to re-examine their role as cultural institutions (Watson 2007, 13). Parallel to the movements, in 1972 the International Council of Museums' roundtable in

Santiago, Chile declared museums to be a “powerful force for human development and a place where the public can look for meaning of the world around them” (Koster 2006).

As a result, ‘new museology’ or ‘community museology’ was termed by French museologists to define the link between museums and social purpose (Quinn 2006. 95).

Peter Vergo defined ‘new museology’ as a state of dissatisfaction with the old museology that focused on the methods rather than purpose (Weil 2007, 49).

New museology asked museums to focus on the community with an emphasis on their needs (Watson 2007, 13). Institutions were asked to find the need in the community and link their missions to it. The link between the museum and community is two-fold: 1) to recognize diversity in the community and connect with new audiences, and 2) establish museums as social agents by relating to social priorities and the public life (Crooke 2006, 182). Figure 2 depicts the traditional museum model in comparison to the concept of community at the core of the museum’s existence.

Traditional Museum Model = building + collection + public (DeCarli 2004, 53)

Community Museum Model = building + mission ↔ community ↔ collection + public

Figure 2. Traditional and Community Museum Models

The community museum model displays the interdependency between the museum and community. The emphasis of serving the public and remaining relevant to the community is vital to what museums are as cultural institutions. The involvement of the community is needed in order to present their stories from a first voice perspective.

A concern amongst museum professionals is that institutions often attach the word ‘community’ to programs in order to make it more appealing to donors and funding agencies.² ‘Relevancy’ has also become another buzzword but the sector is not justified in using such terms if they are not willing to meet the commitment. Emlyn Koster defined relevancy as “a comfort with controversy that, in turn, involves fostering an atmosphere where difficult questions can be broached and a variety of opinions expressed” (Koster 2006). Alan Cochrane argues that the terms have often been used as an ‘aerosol can’ sprayed on programs giving them a more sympathetic appeal (Crooke 2006, 171). The concern is that museums are not vested in an authentic and complete approach. While museums throughout the country have developed outreach programs to attract audiences that would otherwise be overlooked by marketing efforts, most outreach programs only take place once rather than over time. As a consequence outreach programs tend to be transactional and does not allow the opportunity to build a sustainable relationship.

Museums’ mission statements should not be confined to their space, as the mission should extend beyond its four walls. Truly engaging the community has prompted museums to revisit their missions and social worth in society (Crooke 2006, 183). Figure 3 displays the overlap of beliefs and expectations between museum entities and communities. The connections exist but they must find each other. Yet the shift in sharing of power with the community – bringing new voices – might challenge the established curatorial practices (183).

² Resource-dependence theory argues that organizations transform their missions and structures in response to the demands of funding agencies.

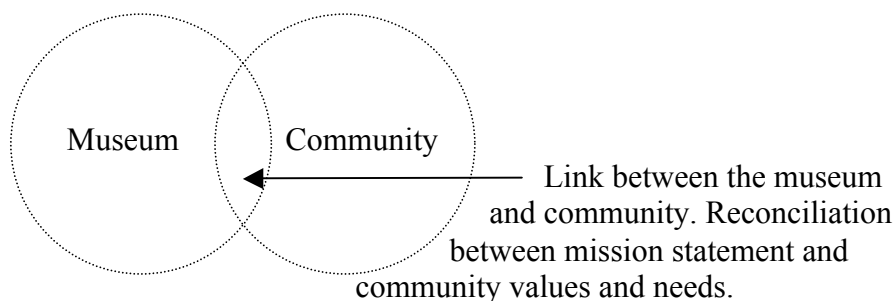


Figure 3. Relationship between the museum and community (Weil 2007, 62)

Various studies including Americans for the Arts’ “Arts and Economic Prosperity,” have found that individuals actively participating in arts and cultural life are more likely to actively participate in the community (Walker 2003, 8). As a consequence “people are also prompted to support community and civic organizations – such as ethnic museums – that support and celebrate the community” (Walker 2003, 8). Ethnic/cultural specific institutions have found success in bridging the gap between museums and communities. Community-based in nature, ethnic specific organizations “move people to understand that art . . . is more than an aesthetic experience” (Chew 2009, 1). Such organizations are positioned in a larger context due to their multiple agendas (1); they engage and build community, preserve culture, and they are at the center of discussing the community’s identity.

National Ethnic Museums

In the 1960’s, cities throughout the country sponsored ethnic specific festivals to celebrate the food, music and traditions of ethnic groups that were fundamental to American culture (Ruffins 1997, 80). However, various ethnic groups were not celebrated in mainstream institutions and were sometimes excluded from the portrayal of American history. The ethnic museum movement of the past forty years questioned the national

American narrative exhibited in mainstream museums (79). Ethnic/cultural specific museums such as the DuSable Museum of African American History (1960) and the National Museum of Mexican Art (1982) in Chicago to the Japan American National Museum (1992) in Los Angeles to the National Hispanic Cultural Center (2000) in Albuquerque are nationally recognized institutions regarded as repositories of ethnic specific cultural experiences (80).

“The term ‘ethnic specific’ museums developed in the 1980’s from the need in the museum world to describe the wide range of museums, historical societies and cultural centers across the nation devoted to the recovery and celebration of different American ethnic groups” (Ruffins 1997, 81). The establishment of ethnic/cultural museums does not undermine the need for mainstream institutions to represent cultural pluralism. On the contrary, ethnic specific museums are established to represent underserved communities and challenge the cultural canon which rules mainstream art institutions. Institutions like NHCC have the ability to connect the Hispano culture to the rest of the world. The Center is not only a place for Hispano/Latinos but also a place for everyone interested in learning about Hispano culture.

Ethnic specific institutions generate a space that allows groups that have been prevented from telling their stories to finally tell them and learn alongside the general public. Edmund Barry Gaither (1992, 57) asserted:

We must reject models of American experience that express – directly and indirectly – a concept of either/or. We must assert inclusiveness and embrace the reality that folk can be simultaneously . . . of an ethnic background . . . and American.

Museums for a New Century declared “institutions dedicated to fostering and preserving particular ethnic heritages important in helping Americans understand their historical experience from different perspectives” (AAM 1984, 25). Such institutions play a unique role as they are at “the center of the discussion of their own traditions” (Gaither 1992, 59). Placing the community at the core of their mission does not undermine their ability to effectively manage, collect, preserve and exhibit the culture of the communities they serve.

The challenge of national ethnic/cultural specific institutions is the voices that are presented. Who controls the narrative that is exhibited in representation of the ethnic group as a whole? The mission of ethnic/cultural institutions stem from the community but the transition to a national scope requires the institutions to inclusively represent the experiences, culture, stories and histories of the communities they represent. For that reason, their collections tend to be indicative of a diverse population.

The rise of national ethnic specific institutions in the nation’s capital has raised various concerns about the portrayal of American society. Politicians like Congressman Jim Moran assert that building individual ethnic specific museums on the National Mall could create a “proliferation of museums that are segregated” (Plumb 2011). National ethnic specific museums were a direct response to the segregation, under and misrepresentation of the American narrative portrayed in mainstream institutions. Institutions like the National Museum of the American Indian, National Museum of Mexican Art, and the Japanese American National Museum do not exist to portray ethnic groups as victims but rather to celebrate and make sense of the community’s identity as ‘American’ while simultaneously preserving their ethnic/racial background.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

Studies have correlated cultural and arts participation to the educated and wealthy. Accordingly, museum audiences do not mirror the changing demographics of the United States. Ethnic/racial groups once considered minority – like the Hispano/Latinos – are becoming the majority. In some states, Hispano/Latinos comprise almost 50% of the population, but in some neighborhoods they may comprise up to 80% of the population. The contradiction lies in that a growing segment of society continues to become a smaller segment of arts participation. Hence, if institutions continue to overlook a huge population – not just Hispano/Latinos – they will become irrelevant, unnecessary and big empty structural facilities. Ethnic specific institutions like the National Museum of Mexican Art (NMMA) and the National Hispanic Cultural Center (NHCC) exist not only to preserve the Hispano/Latino culture but also to present an evolving culture.

The research questions guiding this study included the following:

1. The importance and need of ethnic/cultural specific museums;
2. The contributions of NMMA and NHCC to the Hispano/Latino communities;
3. NMMA and NHCC's relation to the potential establishment of the Smithsonian American Latino Museum.

This qualitative study examines the role of NMMA and NHCC in the Hispano/Latino communities from the perspective of its staff members. Interviews with arts

administrators from NMMA and NHCC were used to collect data in areas regarding the mission, history and programming to determine the engagement of the Hispano/Latino communities. Using the qualitative strategy of inquiry and phenomenological research tradition, the results will detail the experiences of staff members with the primary goal to reveal the value of the institutions to the Hispano/Latino community. The narrative data were transcribed, coded, and categorized in four themes related to the research questions.

Researcher's Role

As a member of the Hispano/Latino community and a museum visitor, the researcher's perception of ethnic specific museums is shaped by personal experiences. As a child, she was not an active participant in the arts when at home because her parents had other priorities. However, she was fortunate that when in elementary school and high school the arts were still a component of the school curriculum. Visiting museums during school field trips was a norm. Yet, with her family she visited the zoo but rarely the Art Institute of Chicago, the Chicago Field Museum or the Museum of Science and Industry.

Her personal experiences when visiting museums is that she seldom saw herself and experiences reflected or when exhibited they were stereotypical rather than reflective. Given her age, when she was a child the National Museum of Mexican Art (then called the Mexican Fine Arts Center Museum) was also in its infancy – both were growing and evolving at the same time. Thus, she was not able to take advantage of the educational programming or internship opportunities because they were not offered to her. Her personal interest in the visual arts is what keeps her engaged in the arts as an adult.

Due to her previous experiences, she brings certain biases to this study. Although every effort will be made to ensure objectivity, these biases may shape the way she views and understands the collected data. This research starts with the perspective that ethnic specific museums are important because they provide a place and space for communities to tell their stories, not ‘their side of the story’ as some may believe but rather to enter the discussion of identity and reconcile the differences between communities.

Setting

Chicago, Illinois

Chicago is the third largest metropolitan city in the United States. The 2010 census estimates the city’s population at 2.8 million. Table 3 details the demographics of Chicago’s metropolitan area; 42% white, 34% African-American, and 27% Hispano/Latino. The city known as the “city of neighborhoods,” is indeed a diversely segregated city by race/ethnicity and socio-economic status.

The 2006 study conducted by the Cultural Policy Center at the University of Chicago “Mapping Cultural Participation in Chicago” analyzed more than one million records of sixty-one arts and cultural organizations. The study found that participation in Chicago’s largest arts organizations were highest in predominantly white high-income areas while participation were consistently lower in areas with large percentages of African-American and Latino households. Mainstream arts and cultural institutions were not engaging households in poor socio-economic areas. On the contrary, the study found that ethnic specific and smaller arts organizations successfully reached diverse audiences and engaged the communities overlooked by larger institutions.

Table 3. U.S. Census 2010 Demographic Estimates of Chicago, Illinois

Demographic Estimates	Estimate	Percent
Total population	2,824,064	--
Male	1,375,968	48.7%
Female	1,448,096	51.3%
White	1,184,475	41.9%
Black or African American	963,818	34.1%
American Indian and Alaska Native	6,409	.2%
Asian	139,414	4.9%
Other	484,653	17.1%
Two or more races	45,095	1.6%
Hispano/Latino (any race)	774,190	27.4%
Mexican	570,162	20.2%
Puerto Rican	104,279	3.7%
Cuban	7,823	.3%
Other Hispanic/Latino	91,126	3.3%
Education		
High School graduate or higher	--	78.8%
Bachelor's degree or higher	--	31.7%
Speak a language other than English at home (5 yrs. and over)	920,938	35.2%
Economic Characteristics (<i>in 2009 inflation adjusted dollars</i>)		
In labor force (16yrs and over)	1,458,475	65.8%
Median household income	46,781	--
Median family income	53,226	--
Per capita income	26,800	--
Families below poverty level	--	17.2%
Individuals below poverty level	--	20.8%

Sources: 2010 data released by U.S. Census Bureau "American Community Survey."

The interviews and study will take place on site at the NMMA located southwest of the city in the heart of Pilsen neighborhood. In the early 1950's, the demographics of Pilsen started to reflect a growing Latino population predominantly from Mexico. The history of Mexican-Americans in Chicago dates back to World War I when Mexican workers labored on the city's railroads and steel mills (Fernández 2005, 164).

Pilsen's close proximity to Chicago's business district (the Loop), the University of Illinois at Chicago, and medical district has made it an accessible and appealing

neighborhood. As a result, the influx of developers and the city government's interest in developing the area has resulted in escalated real estate prices resulting in high property taxes, home prices and rents (Betancur 2005). Consequently, as property values increase, rent follows, forcing out lower income residents and replacing them with higher paying customers (2005). The contradiction lies in that redevelopment of low-income neighborhoods is intended to benefit residents but the effects of it usually results in the displacement of residents.

Albuquerque, New Mexico

Albuquerque is the largest city in New Mexico with an estimated population of 515,107 residents. Table 4 details the demographics of the city; 68% white, 3.5% African-American, and 44.1% Hispano/Latinos reside in the area. The city of Albuquerque is a unique place due to the nearly 400 years of shared history between Mexicanos, Hispanos, Native Americans and Anglos where the cultures once collided and now co-exist. The interviews and study will take place on site at NHCC located in the oldest neighborhood in Albuquerque known as Barelás.

Don Pedro Valera formally established Barelás as a ranching settlement in the late 1600's (Shepherd 2001). "But the landing at Barelás had been the crossing point of the Rio Grande a full century before; Coronado crossed there in 1540 and Juan de Oñate followed the same path in 1598. Governor Diego de Penalosa formally established the settlement in 1662" (Shepherd 2001). In early history, Barelás' local economy was secured by the commerce passing through el Camino Real and Route 66. However, the 1937 rerouting of Route 66 to Central Avenue proved detrimental to the area (Shepherd

2001). The use of the highways and predominance of personal automobiles resulted in less dependence on the railroads (City of Albuquerque 1991). By 1970 the railroad repair shops closed leaving several residents without jobs, vacant strips of land and buildings that edged the rail lines to downtown's east side (Shepherd 2001). Consequently, the city soon began demolishing properties in the neighborhood. NHCC was the first major project to come to Barelas. In addition to exemplifying a cultural anchor, its presence in the community is expected to bring an economic boost to the area.

Table 4. U.S. Census 2010 Demographic Estimates of Albuquerque, New Mexico

Demographic Estimates	Estimate	Percent
Total population	515,107	--
Male	252,470	49%
Female	262,637	51%
White	351,797	68.3%
Black or African American	17,922	3.5%
American Indian and Alaska Native	25,875	5.0%
Asian	13,460	2.6%
Other	87,277	16.9%
Two or more races	18,776	3.6%
Hispano/Latino (any race)	227,339	44.1%
Mexican	107,111	20.8%
Puerto Rican	2,659	.5%
Cuban	1,711	.3%
Other Hispanic/Latino	115,858	22.5%
Education		
High School graduate or higher	--	86.9%
Bachelor's degree or higher	--	32.2%
Speak a language other than English at home (5 yrs. and over)	139,875	29.4%
Economic Characteristics (<i>in 2009 inflation adjusted dollars</i>)		
In labor force (16yrs and over)	272,978	67.5%
Median household income	45,478	--
Median family income	58,045	--
Per capita income	25,542	--
Families below poverty level	--	11.2%
Individuals below poverty level	--	15.2%

Sources: 2010 data released by U.S. Census Bureau "American Community Survey."

Sample/Participants

The sampling procedure used by the researcher was purposive sampling. Given the nature of the study, the participants were restricted to staff members of NMMA and NHCC and the participant's willingness to participate. Participants of this research study included a total of six staff members; three from NMMA and three from NHCC. At NMMA, the researcher interviewed the President/Founder, the Director of Education and a docent. At NHCC, the researcher interviewed the Director of Education, the Museum Director/Chief Curator, and the Volunteer/Docent Tour Coordinator.

The participants of the study included three males and three females; four staff members were Hispano/Latinos and two were Anglo; one male participant was in the age range of 20 – 25, one female participant was in the age range of 30 – 35, two female and two male participants were over the age of 40. All the participants spoke English and Spanish. Two female participants have more than 10 years of experience in the field; two male and one female have more than 20 years of experience in the field.

Data Collection/Procedures

The researcher first looked at the existing data about museum visitor demographics and trends. The collection of qualitative documents – i.e., news articles, scholarly essays, annual reports, information on websites, 990 reports, etc. – enabled the researcher to get a sense of what had been previously written about each institution. In addition, the use of such information reflected the perceptions of the community towards the existence and work of each respective institution.

Following the preliminary collection of data, the researcher drafted a set of questions based on the three guiding questions of the study. The questions were then categorized by core museum functions including programming, education, fundraising, mission and history, marketing, and audience development. All participants received the questions prior to the interview in order to provide a general sense of the information the researcher was looking for. Not all questions were addressed during the interview but the questions helped guide the interview and conversation.

The data were collected through interviews and site visits. The data collection took place over a 4-week period. The interviews were conducted at each respective facility on the following dates:

1. NMMA: Carlos Tortolero, President and Founder: April 22, 2011 at 10:00 a.m.
2. NMMA: Nancy Villafranca-Guzmán, Director of Education: May 12, 2011 at 10:00 a.m.
3. NMMA: Mario Hernandez Jr, Docent: May 12, 2011 at 11:00 a.m.
4. NHCC: Dr. Shelle Sánchez, Director of Education: May 16, 2011 at 10:00 a.m.
5. NHCC: Doug Simon, Visitor and Docent/Tour Coordinator: May 16, 2011 at 11:00 a.m.
6. NHCC: Dr. Tey Marianna Nunn, Chief Curator/Museum Director: May 16, 2011 at 2:00 p.m.

The researcher met with each participant individually in their offices using the interview protocol (see Appendix B). Each interview was audio recorded for accuracy and lasted no longer than one hour.

Data Analysis

The collected data were transcribed and categorized based on the research questions and developing themes. The interview questions were matched to answer the three guiding questions of the study. A coding method was used to organize the data into four themes. Quotes were then selected to support the findings of the study.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

This research evolved from the researcher's interest in the study of Hispano/Latino arts participation. Originally, the research explored how NMMA and NHCC engaged the Hispano/Latino communities while cultivating diverse audiences. In the midst of the research process, the 'how' was not as important as the 'why.' Why do institutions like NMMA and NHCC exist? Why are they important?

The existing literature explores the disparities between museum participation and the diverse American population. Accordingly, Hispano/Latinos are not active participants in the arts sector. Are institutions not effectively reaching the Hispano/Latino communities or are they simply not interested? Studies have found that Hispano/Latinos inactive arts participation is due to the exclusion of their experiences and stories from mainstream institutions. Thus, the relationship between the subject matter and personal experiences of the viewer is non-existent. The underrepresentation of Hispano/Latinos in mainstream arts and cultural institutions led organized groups of artists, writers, activists and community leaders to address the issue by voicing the need of a space and place to call their own. Institutions like NMMA and NHCC are unique places with numerous stories to tell about themselves as organizations and most importantly about the communities they serve.

This research was guided by three fundamental questions; why are ethnic/cultural institutions important, what are NMMA and NHCC's contributions to the Hispano/Latino communities and what is their connection to the potential establishment of the Smithsonian American Latino Museum. Staff members were asked a set of questions corresponding to the three guiding questions of the research. The interviews at the institutions provided insightful information about the purpose of the organizations from the perspective of the staff members. The findings will be presented in four sections based on the themes that emerged from the interviews including first voice, integration, eliminating stereotypes, and the discussion of the Smithsonian American Latino Museum.

In 1982, Carlos Tortolero along with a group of educators founded the Mexican Fine Arts Center Museum (MFACM) in order to showcase Mexican culture from ancient times to the present while representing both sides of the border. When asking Carlos Tortolero, "Why Chicago? What was the need?" He will simply answer, "Why not? Are we not important if we are not part of a bigger picture?" Museum docent, Mario Hernández Jr. added,

He lays it out simple. There was a need for it because a big population of people had nothing here to remind them of home. They had nothing to teach their kids about what they missed out in Mexico.

Due to the influx of Mexican immigrants and the growing Mexican-American generations in Chicago, it was important to have a center that would educate Mexicanos about their own culture while educating the general public. Located in a predominantly Mexican neighborhood, Carlos Tortolero reiterated the unquestionable location of the museum. He said,

We need more museums in communities. Not everything that's good has to be in downtown Chicago. Having the museum in the community is a political statement in it of itself.

More often than not, ethnic specific organizations – small or medium in size – tend to be “located in impoverished . . . neighborhoods seeking affirmation, rebirth and a sense of identity” (Chew 2009, 1). Museums located in the communities they represent challenges the typical role of mainstream institutions because they have the ability to truly work with the community at different levels.

Since its beginnings, NMMA's mission has been to stimulate, preserve and appreciate Mexican culture through exhibitions, education, visual and performing arts programming. In 2007, the museum pursued accreditation by the American Association of Museums (AAM), which led the name change to the National Museum of Mexican Art (NMMA). Carlos Tortolero summarized:

We are the only Latino museum accredited by AAM. That shows that we will preserve the art at a certain standard. As a minority institution we have to prove two things; one, the art is good, and secondly that financially/administratively we can manage the organization. In 2007, we proved that we could do it. We can take care of the art like other (institutions).

In accordance, ethnic/cultural organizations are often seen as inferior since they tend to represent and exhibit art directly from the community. The cultural canon created by mainstream museums does not fit the aesthetics of ethnic/cultural organizations because the latter challenges the notion of ethnic art as folk rather than fine art.

The late 1970's and early 1980's witnessed the frustration of Hispano artists throughout New Mexico due to the exclusion of Hispano art and culture from art museums and galleries. Therefore the portrayal of New Mexican culture was not adequately portrayed due to the centuries of shared history between Hispanos,

Mexicanos, Native Americans and Anglos. The exclusion of Hispano artists from the conversation was consequently omitting part of New Mexico's cultural history.

As a result, in 1983 the Hispanic Center Foundation³ was founded by attorney Arturo Ortega and businessman Edward Romero (DellaFlora and Propp 2000) with the premise to promote Hispanic arts and culture. At the time, building a cultural center was not a priority but the foundation kept Hispanic culture in the public realm (2000). Although in 1997, the foundation became the fundraising arm of what would be known as the National Hispanic Cultural Center. Instrumental to the establishment of the NHCC was a group of artists that rallied for a space they would be able to call their own. Dr. Tey Marianna Nunn summarized:

As with many ethnic museums of the time, the first seeds were planted by artists, writers, performers, and theater professionals. Everyone was supporting each other and everybody knew each other but they could not get into mainstream museums.

Dr. Shelle Sánchez added:

Entering at the time, Santa Fe was evolving into the arts mecca of the southwest but sadly very few Hispanic artists were being shown in the galleries. The art of the community that is historically important to the state was not being shown anywhere. The large Hispanic population felt they didn't have a place and it wasn't just a feeling, it was true.

The involvement of Hispano artists was instrumental to the establishment of what was originally to be called the Hispanic Cultural Center of New Mexico. Yet, the interest of politicians and influx of federal funds for construction resulted in the name change to the National Hispanic Cultural Center; hence the increase of scope from regional to national.

Dr. Nunn added that NHCC could not have happened without the support of business

³ The Hispanic Center Foundation is now called the National Hispanic Cultural Center Foundation (NHCCF).

people and politicians, but it took the ‘corazón’ out of the movement. Consequently, the group of artists that led the movement were not happy with the national shift. Dr. Sánchez added “the group of artists finally felt they were going to have their own space and a week later they lost it to a national mission.”

Since its grand opening in 2000, NHCC has been dedicated to the study, advancement and presentation of Hispanic culture, arts and humanities through its art museum, media, performing, educational, history and literary arts programming. The envy of several neighboring states, NHCC’s massive campus consists of the Intel Center for Technology and Visual Arts, a library and genealogy center, computer learning center, restaurant, gift shop, and the Roy E. Disney Center for the Performing Arts. The center is housed in the heart of the predominantly Hispano and historic Barelas neighborhood.

As national institutions, NMMA and NHCC have the responsibility to engage and represent Hispano/Latinos nationally while educating the public at large. The role of NMMA and NHCC as national institutions differs due to their governing structures. NHCC’s state governance relationship situates the institution in a vulnerable situation. The Center functions within a state government framework since it is primarily funded by the state legislature to cover general operating expenses. NHCC does however have a private foundation, the National Hispanic Cultural Center Foundation (NHCCF), tasked with raising funds in the private sector to aid with programming and capital needs. Unfortunately, the high involvement of politics, lack of formal organizational structure and misuse of funds (Furlow 2011) has been detrimental to the relationship between NHCC and NHCCF. In addition, the high turn over of executive leadership is of concern

as there is no vision or strategic plan for the future. The organizational structure rather than the leadership of previous executive directors is questionable. Consequently, the current organizational structure does not allow NHCC to effectively fill the role of a true national institution due mainly to its limited state budget. On the contrary, NMMA is an independent national museum since its board of directors control all aspects of the museum's collection, planning and financial stability. Nonetheless, like all nonprofits, NMMA depends on the support of the constantly changing external environment thus requiring the museum to readily adapt and change.

First Voice

Ethnic/cultural institutions contribute to the understanding of cultural diversity through their first voice approach by exhibiting arts and culture from the perspective of the community. Dr. Nunn agrees that first voice institutions have the ability to promote and present culture from the artists' or community's viewpoint rather than a curatorial perspective. As a result, the first voice approach narrows the possibility of misrepresentation and misinterpretation of Hispano/Latino arts and culture. When NHCC's museum opened, the first exhibited shows were large national Latino art shows. Dr. Nunn added,

The group of artists that felt they had founded the museum felt left out again. That is why I'm focused on the New Mexico component because we have so many artists here that have yet to be shown.

Unfortunately the need of the community was ignored once again since the local artists did not have a space to exhibit their art in spite of having a huge cultural center dedicated to Hispano culture. As a result, Dr. Nunn found it important to have a 'community gallery' at NHCC's museum designated to New Mexican artists. The gallery allows local

artists to actively participate in the functions of the museum while directly addressing the underrepresentation of Hispano artists.

Museums are – and should be – the platform where artists get to voice the concerns of the community. Nancy Villafranca-Guzmán said,

Several of the community issues prevail as artists voice their issues and concerns. We make sure that even though we are committed to contemporary art, we keep a balance of socially minded exhibitions. For example, in the Declaration of Immigration (2008) we had the artists speak their mind about the immigration debate.

NMMA's 2008 Declaration of Immigration exhibition depicted the experiences and viewpoints of various U.S. immigrant communities. "The works of over 70 artists helped visitors increase their understanding of the complex issue by providing immigrant perspectives that are seldom included in the national debate over immigration" (National Museum of Mexican Art 2008). The exhibition engaged the immigrant communities in the discussion of their place in American society. The issue of immigration connects the Hispano/Latino communities with other ethnic communities – as immigration policy does not only affect the Hispano/Latinos – thus generating a sense of cross-cultural understanding due to the shared experiences.

Staff members at NMMA and NHCC embody the communities they serve, as they are familiar with the Hispano/Latino experience. Dr. Sánchez added,

We have a real responsibility to be active members of the community and really engage people and make the Center a place where people want to go. A place where they want to invest their time and a place where they feel their ideas are heard and embraced.

However, they have the responsibility to actively participate in the community if they truly desire to represent a 'first voice' perspective. For that reason, NMMA and NHCC

staff members remain informed by connecting with local organizations and artists. For instance, Nancy Villafranca-Guzmán's involvement with the Pilsen Education Task Force informs her about the opportunities and challenges of the schools in the community. Dr. Nunn from NHCC spends time at artists' studios and galleries to remain connected with the local arts scene and engage the artists in a dialogue.

The value of ethnic/cultural institutions derives from their ability to meet the social needs of the community. Truly exemplifying the concept of 'new museology,' NMMA and NHCC are educational institutions with a social agenda in mind. Mainstream institutions are of the mindset that communities can only be engaged in the museum.

Nancy Villafranca-Guzmán said,

We can serve our community based on their needs, even if they do not enter the museum. If right now the Latino community is an immigrant community that's a little bit intimidated about visiting the museum then let's go to them or let's give their children the resources. Let's work with those teachers, let's work with those families. The way we work with schools and the community, and the way we develop relationships is quite different from other organizations.

Accordingly, NMMA has hosted numerous meetings and conferences from domestic violence to health-related forums. Opening the discussion about issues affecting the community is fundamental to the institution's role as agent of social change. Carlos Tortolero related the following story,

Often museum directors from other institutions tell me "Your museum is not a regular museum." I know they are trying to insult me but I take it as a compliment and say "Thank you. You get me." We are an institution that is a part of the community not apart from the community.

He believes museums need to change not simply because they are seeking funds from a foundation but rather because all museums are in the business of serving people. When museums address issues important to the community, they acknowledge that the issues

are of their concern as well. Arts organizations have the opportunity to link community needs with their missions; consequently, bridging the gap between everyday life and the arts.

Integration

Reaching the broader Hispano/Latino communities in their respective regions and nationally has been a challenge for NMMA and NHCC. The idea that Hispano/Latinos will automatically attend a museum because it was built for them is a common misconception. Accordingly, Doug Simon remembers the struggle of getting NHCC opened by saying,

Even after we opened the Center, there were comments like ‘it’s a white elephant, nobody goes there’ because some people thought that without building an audience just flocks of people would come here.

Similarly, engaging the Hispano/Latino communities at NMMA was a process. Nancy Villafranca-Guzmán said,

It took us longer to get (Latinos) in the museum. By engaging them, they trust us. They feel welcomed and that this is their museum. There was a point when the Latino community was not the majority of our audience. A few years ago it might have been an even split. Even though our audience is still very diverse, the Mexican community – especially the immigrant community – has slowly started to come in through our doors and learn that we are here.

NMMA and NHCC embody the experiences of the communities as they are first voice institutions. So, why are Hispano/Latinos reluctant to enter the doors? Dr. Nunn believes “museums are intimidating to a lot of people especially if it’s an English language focused museum.”

The complexity of the Hispano/Latino community makes it challenging to find a solution that will effectively engage the community as a whole. Museums have to be

aware of the complexities within the Hispano/Latino community. Accordingly, the research found that recent immigrants and first generations – defined as Hispano/Latinos born outside the U.S. (Pew Hispanic Center 2002) – are least likely to visit. If a recent immigrant did not attend a museum in the country of origin, why would the individual visit a museum here? It is an error to assume that the community will simply visit the institution because someone told them it was built for them.

As a response, NMMA and NHCC offer a wide range of programs based on their missions in an attempt to dispel the notions of cultural institutions as elitist and solely created for the educated and wealthy. Nancy Villafranca-Guzmán stated that the mission to promote the beauty and richness of Mexican culture is used as the foundation to appreciate culture in general. Dr. Sánchez added that NHCC “has focused on presenting and celebrating not only what people have already done but what people are doing now and what the next generation is going to contribute to Hispanic arts and humanities.”

Six years ago, NMMA started an after school program which placed the museum on a different level in terms of continuing its commitment as a community center. The afterschool program allows the museum to reach children and youth that do not have direct access to the museum. Nancy Villafranca-Guzmán added,

Our relationships with the schools have been a lot stronger, a lot more solid and a lot more sustained. We partner with schools for 3 to 5 years and we provide after school programming and multiple classes at the school.

Due to the success of the afterschool programs, the education department added a family component to the programs. She explained,

We partner with other organizations to offer parent programming. At the end of the program we have a family night. I have noticed that since we started doing

that, some of those regular families visit the museum. Ultimately we'd love that they come on their own to appreciate the art.

The collaboration between cultural institutions, local organizations and schools are important to the vitality of the community. Proven success of their educational and afterschool programs, Nancy Villafranca-Guzmán recalled an important story that reinforces the ability of museums to undertake various roles in the community by providing the outlets that respond to community needs. She said,

One of the first comments I received during our first family night was from a recent immigrant family from Mexico. The parents attended the parent education program and their children were in the education program. The mom came up to me and said, 'Thank you so much. I never thought I was going to be able to integrate so easily and so fast to living in Chicago.'

NMMA – like many ethnic specific museums – are at the discussion of the community's identity by addressing what it means to be Mexican in the U.S. or American while preserving the culture of origin. Arts and cultural institutions do not exist to simply hang or display 'pretty' objects; they have the opportunity to truly make a difference in the community. NMMA and NHCC have addressed the lack of Hispano/Latino arts participation by collaborating with the schools in their respective regions. However, teaching a child how to make 'art' is not arts education. Nancy Villafranca-Guzmán stated,

It's about engaging the child in the arts, engaging the teacher, engaging the parents, tailoring the program to meet the needs of the children. For some museums its numbers, numbers, numbers. How many kids? For us it's a more sustainable program and focused on outcomes.

For the past 10 years, NHCC's high school program – free of charge – has reached students that have since graduated from college. Now educators themselves, alums return to run the programs for the Center. Dr. Sánchez added,

[Alums] are active members in the community and have just been doing really amazing things in their creative, professional and personal lives. Many have said ‘these programs work; they were a major turning point for me as a person.’ A lot of times it’s the mentors they meet in the program, for others it’s just being part of a supportive community of 10 to 15 kids.

In addition, the intensive arts institute program has seen great success. Students are immersed in a 4 – 6 week camp working alongside artists, writers or actors. The circus program is tuition-based on a sliding scale. The price ranges from \$50 a week to \$225 a week. Dr. Sánchez summarized,

We make sure that our programs are reflective of the community at large. Sometimes we have 60% to 70% of Hispanic enrollment. The challenge is the representation of socio-economic status which is just as important as race. The mix of experiences and backgrounds is what’s life-changing for a lot of the kids. They start to see each other differently because they get that close to each other and support each other, and some of the class barriers break down.

The participation of children and adults is important since studies have found that Hispano/Latinos attend museums because they want to learn something new, and parents are more likely to attend in order to enhance their children’s learning experience. Exhibiting Hispano/Latino culture from a first voice perspective should be the first step. Truly engaging and integrating the community requires museums to establish a dialogue with the community in order to find the needs and respond to them.

Eliminating Stereotypes

Hispano/Latino art is often misunderstood and misinterpreted due to the complexities and diversity within the culture. Accordingly, Dr. Nunn addressed the need of Latino art critics and individuals well versed in Latino art in order to understand the intricacies of the Latino community. More often than not when Hispano/Latino art is exhibited in mainstream museums it is mainly representative of the past or portrayed as

folk art. Doug Simon affirmed, “I can state for a fact that you did not see Hispanic artists really represented in Albuquerque museums. The only place exhibiting Hispano art was the Museum of International Folk Art in Santa Fe, but it was folk art not fine art.”

Consequently, NHCC’s 2008 “Meso-Americhanics (Maneuvering Mestizaje)” exhibition showcased the work of renowned bi-national artists Einar and Jamex de la Torre which explored the relationship of two cultures – Mexican and American – while addressing the complexities of living in a global society (Nunn 2009). Among the multiple layers of meaning found in their art, their work is important because it dispels the perception of Hispano/Latino art as merely folk.

NMMA and NHCC dispel stereotypes of Hispano/Latino art, life and culture by exhibiting a broad range of art and artists. The institutions educate the general public while simultaneously educating the Hispano/Latino communities as well. Dr. Nunn added, “When members of the community ask continuously for Frida Kahlo exhibits [it is concerning], it would be easy to present Mexican themed exhibitions for the next 10 years but in good conscious we cannot do that.” The stories of Hispano/Latino communities – other than the Mexican and Puerto Rican communities – have yet to be presented. Accordingly, NHCC’s 2009 “Confluencias: Inside Arte Cubano Contemporáneo,” challenged the impressions of Cuban culture. The exhibition brought to the forefront the work of artists provoking a conversation with and about Cuba. In addition, NMMA’s 2008 “African Presence in Mexico: From Yanga to the Present” addressed the influence and existence of African ancestry in Mexico; a part of history that has remained in the sidelines for decades. Nancy Villafranca-Guzmán added that Mexico as a country has been able to accept its indigenous roots but not its African roots. The

outcome of the exhibition was to educate the Mexican community and exhibit the complexities and diversity found within Mexico.

NMMA and NHCC exhibit a myriad of exhibitions with multiple agendas in mind. They exhibit art from the perspective of the community and simultaneously challenge the community to question and reflect on their culture, consequently educating the community and the general public about what constitutes Hispano/Latino art. For that reason, a large component to NMMA's educational outcomes is visual literacy, Nancy Villafranca-Guzmán summarized,

Visual literacy has become a strong component of our student programs because even when children are not creating the art they are surrounded by the images. We want them to be critical thinkers of the art. Visual literacy and critical thinking are skills that we want to strengthen, whether its arts, reading or writing. Making the obvious connection that when you're looking at a painting it's the same process as reading and writing.

There is no formula to decipher or interpret art. Even when the art is directly from the community – the first voice perspective – members of the community may not feel comfortable in a museum setting or may not understand the subject matter not because they are ignorant but the notion of needing a formal education nurtures such insecurities.

Nancy Villafranca-Guzmán related an interesting story,

One of the fondest memories that I have is from years ago when I was in college and giving tours at the museum. I remember [one of] our school group's was looking at our Mexicanidad exhibit. We had a thematic section on corn, and we had some of the tools used in ancient times and today, including a tortilla press and a metate (grinding stone). I asked if anyone had any questions and this boy raised his hand and made a connection. He said, "I have one of those in my kitchen or my mom has one of those in my kitchen." I saw something that happened in that child where his shoulders went back and he was like 'yeah, that's in my kitchen and it's in a museum on display.' I think it did a lot for his self confidence."

As a consequence, ethnic/cultural institutions continue to change the community's perceptions of what belongs in a museum. She added that by promoting positive cultural identity through educational programs the community would learn about themselves, affirm their identity, understand what culture is and learn about other cultures while appreciating them at the same time.

Smithsonian American Latino Museum

The potential creation of the Smithsonian American Latino Museum aims to preserve Hispano/Latino heritage for the benefit of all Americans (National Commission for the National Museum of the American Latino 2011). Accordingly, several Americans including American Hispano/Latinos know little of Latino contributions to American society, as many stories have not been told. Institutions like NMMA and NHCC have proven success in their approach to represent and engage the local Hispano/Latino communities in their respective regions. The discussion of a potential Smithsonian American Latino Museum questions the ability of a national institution to successfully represent the various communities within the Hispano/Latino community. Ethnic specific organizations representing Mexicanos and Puerto Riqueños – the two predominantly Hispano/Latino racial groups in the U.S. – already exist. However, the underrepresentation of Brazileños, Peruanos, Uruguayos, and Panameños among other Hispano/Latino racial groups is of concern.

A national American Latino museum in the nation's capital dedicated to the preservation and representation of the American Hispano/Latinos will hopefully bring together the communities to continue the conversation about identity and their place

within the larger context of American society. However, among the concerns in the Latino arts field is the question of the American Latino Museum's ability to represent the complexities of the Hispano/Latino culture. Dr. Nunn added,

The problem is when you haven't had a table, and then you have that table built and you're not invited to the table – there's going to be a lot of people feeling left out or people feeling that it's not being managed properly. If you're going to be national then you need to have meaningful relationships with other Latino-specific organizations that have fought the fight. They have already been through a lot of the battles and they can help in better understanding the multi-layered and complex Latino community.

The proposal of creating the Smithsonian American Latino Museum evolved from the criticism of the evident exclusion of Hispano/Latinos from the largest museum complexes in the world, the Smithsonian Institution. In 1993, then Secretary Robert McCormick Adams and Under Secretary Constance Ernestine Barry Newman established the Task Force on Latino Issues comprised of 15 Latino professionals. The Task Force created the report "Willful Neglect: the Smithsonian Institution and U.S. Latinos," which investigated the Latino presence at the institution and made recommendations for improvements. The report (Smithsonian Institution 1994) stated:

The Smithsonian Institution almost entirely excludes and ignores the Latino population of the United States. This lack of inclusion is glaringly obvious in the lack of a single museum facility focusing on Latino and Latin American art, culture, or history; the near-absence of permanent Latino exhibitions or programming . . . the small Latino staff, and the minimal number in curatorial or managerial positions; and the almost total lack of Latino representation in the governance structure.

The Smithsonian responded by developing the Smithsonian Latino Center (SLC). SLC is dedicated to ensure that Latino contributions to art, science and humanities are represented at the Smithsonian Institution and its affiliated organizations (SLC 2011).

Yet, other than the creation of SLC not much has changed. As a consequence, in 2008

former President George W. Bush signed legislation establishing the Latino Museum Commission. President Barack Obama appointed 23 members to the commission. On May 5, 2011 the commission moved forward with its recommendations to establish the American Latino Museum on the National Mall under the umbrella of the Smithsonian Institution.⁴ To date a decision has not been made but the conversation carries on with various opposing views. Democratic Congressman of Virginia Jim Moran declared:

Every indigenous immigrant community, particularly those brought here enslaved, have a story to tell and it should be told and part of our history. The problem is that much as we would like to think that all Americans are going to go to the African American Museum, I'm afraid it's not going to happen . . . The Museum of American History is where all the white folks are going to go, and the American Indian Museum is where the Indians are going to feel at home. And African Americans are going to go to their own museum. And Latinos are going to go (to) their own museum. And that's not what America is all about (Bedard and Huey-Burns 2011).

Ethnic/cultural or national ethnic/cultural museums are not created to challenge or dispute the stories or histories displayed in mainstream museums but rather to add to the dialogue. The debate over the addition of another ethnic specific museum to the National Mall resonates with the resistance of adding the National Museum of the American Indian and the National Museum of African American History and Culture. Politicians like the aforementioned are concerned over the development of more ethnic specific museums as more underrepresented communities demand representation. However, this conversation or debate would not exist if mainstream museums successfully represented cultural pluralism. The symbolic representation of the potential Smithsonian American

⁴ While the Commission strongly recommends governing the American Latino Museum under the Smithsonian Institution, this is one of the four governance models drafted by the commission (33-39). To review the entire report visit, <http://www.americanlatinomuseum.gov/pdf/NMAL%20FINAL-Report.pdf>.

Latino Museum cannot be disputed; if approved, the question then becomes ‘now what?’ Has the conversation about the Hispano/Latino community adequately developed among museum professionals? Is the Hispano/Latino arts field ready to embrace another national museum given the experiences of NMMA and NHCC?

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Education has been the foundation of museums in the United States of America since their inception. They are often seen as places where people may look for answers as museums are asked to reflect the nation. Unfortunately, the celebration of cultural diversity is not prevalent in mainstream institutions. For that reason, ethnic groups fundamentally important to the American narrative such as Hispano/Latinos have been under and misrepresented.

The growth of the Hispano/Latino population in the U.S. and the predictions of its impact on the national population should be of concern to mainstream institutions. In 2008, Hispano/Latinos only comprised 8.6% of museum visitors while representing 15.1% of the population, meaning that out of 45.4 million Hispano/Latinos only 3.9 million were museumgoers. As a result, ethnic specific institutions like the National Museum of Mexican Art and the National Hispanic Cultural Center developed to provide a space for Hispano/Latinos to share their stories in order to educate the community and the general public. The purpose of this qualitative study was to extend the research on ethnic/cultural institutions. This investigation sought to determine the importance of NMMA and NHCC as seen from their staff, and the implications of their experiences to the potential establishment of the Smithsonian American Latino Museum in the nation's capital.

First Voice

The first voice approach exemplified by NMMA and NHCC allows the Hispano/Latino community to generate a sense of pride and belonging. Exhibiting Hispano/Latino culture from the perspective of the community challenges the cultural canon exhibited by mainstream institutions. NHCC's community gallery and NMMA's use of advisory committees and focus groups shares the curatorial power with the community. As a result, Hispano/Latino culture is no longer portrayed by stereotypical images such as charros (traditional horsemen), sombreros or piñatas. Artists like Edward Gonzales have dedicated their careers to depict Hispano/Latino life, culture and traditions from their perspective.

Language, traditions, food and music are important components of any culture. The inevitable assimilation of American Hispano/Latino generations results in the dilution of culture and missing pieces of their identity. NMMA and NHCC allow such generations to rediscover aspects of the culture that were once labeled 'un-American' such as speaking Spanish. The concept of the 'melting pot' is what ethnic specific museums challenge as the nation should be able to celebrate the ethnic cultural diversity found throughout the nation. People should be able to retain their ethnic/racial identity while simultaneously being 'American.' Ethnic/cultural institutions are not established to further segregate ethnic communities from the general population but rather to express their contributions to the U.S.

Integration

This research began assuming that ethnic/cultural institutions would not have difficulties reaching the communities they represent. However, the findings proved otherwise. Similar to mainstream institutions, NMMA and NHCC have faced challenges reaching the Hispano/Latino community. Ethnic specific institutions are not exempt from making a connection with the community and fulfilling their social needs. Studies have found ‘family time’ to be of importance to the Hispano/Latino communities. Accordingly, such audiences may not be interested in a museum experience if the possibility to socialize and gather with the family is nonexistent. For that reason, the perception of museums as educators and not spaces of leisure may be an impediment particularly to first generation and recent immigrants, as they may not know what to expect from a museum visit.

Consequently, collaborations with local organizations and educational programming have proven success in the integration and engagement of local Hispano/Latino communities. The transition of the community from passive museumgoers to stakeholders derives from a sustainable relationship between the museum and the community. Since their beginnings, NMMA and NHCC have served as platforms to discuss issues including identity, immigration, health and politics to educate the Hispano/Latino community and general public.

Working with and engaging the local Hispano/Latino communities is key to reaching the Hispano/Latino communities nationally. NMMA and NHCC’s national status asks the institutions to represent and engage a broader audience. Accordingly, NMMA supports its commitment at a national level through its Sor Juana festival and

national traveling exhibitions. The Sor Juana festival is one of the largest multidisciplinary festivals featuring dance, film, literature, culinary arts, music, theater and visual arts. It has traveled to Austin, Dallas, Houston, San Antonio, Fort Worth, and Milwaukee. In addition, national traveling exhibitions like the 2008 groundbreaking “African Presence in Mexico: From Yanga to the Present” reached and linked the Hispano/Latino and African - American communities by exhibiting a part of shared history between the two. Among one of the institutions to exhibit the traveling show was NHCC. The Center successfully engaged the local Hispano/Latino and African - American communities by adding a program that explored the early African presence in New Mexico (Danny López, pers. comm.). NHCC’s approach was key to the local success of the exhibit because they made a connection with the local communities thus making the international exhibition relevant to the history and culture of New Mexico.

The history of Hispano/Latino presence in New Mexico and willful neglect of presenting such history led to the need of NHCC to represent the Hispano/Latino communities, but did NHCC aspire to become national too soon? NHCC’s multidisciplinary functions do not fit the framework of a state agency. The internal infrastructure of the institution has proven to be a challenge therefore preventing NHCC from truly functioning as a national institution. The governing and funding structures of the institution should be addressed by the state before the organization is able to move forward and successfully plan for its future.

The only continuum at NHCC has been its dedicated, hardworking, creative and passionate staff. Aware of the complexities of a national scope within a state-governing framework, the energies of staff members have been concentrated on repairing the

evident neglect of exhibiting Hispano and Nuevomexicano art in mainstream institutions. NHCC is the hidden crown jewel of the southwest and has the opportunity to truly shine as a national institution; it is an important place to know.

Eliminating Stereotypes

The complexities and generalization of Hispano/Latino culture has led to the misrepresentation of its art. For years, ethnic art has been understood as folk and primitive. Artists like Patrocinio Barela, one of the nationally recognized artists of the New Deal, were exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City in the late 1930's. Although nationally recognized, Barela's art was sidelined as primitive art and not fine art. NMMA and NHCC have the ability to 'rediscover' deceased Hispano/Latino artists that contributed to the American art narrative. Consequently, exhibiting such artists increases the knowledge of the community and the general public regarding Hispano/Latino art and artists.

Labeling ethnic/racial communities is unavoidable since stereotypes are prevalent in the media, advertisements, movies, etc. It is an error to assume that all Hispano/Latino communities are the same. Although similarities may be found, every community has their own traditions and variances in the Spanish language such as idioms. For instance, one would not use Puerto Rican idioms to describe Peruvian art as there is no relation. Therefore, the representation of various Hispano/Latino communities is vital as not every community shares the same experiences and traditions; recent immigrants, acculturated and assimilated Hispano/Latinos have different stories and experiences to tell.

Smithsonian American Latino Museum

Institutions like NMMA, NHCC and the Smithsonian affiliate Museo Alameda amongst many others already exist to represent the experiences of Hispano/Latinos in the U.S. However, NMMA and NHCC have faced the same challenges of mainstream institutions since Hispano/Latinos are not active participants in the arts. Hence, is the community not attending museums due to the context in which art is presented? Are the nuances of Hispano/Latino culture such as family gatherings an impediment to fully immerse in a museum experience?

NMMA and NHCC have found success in the engagement of the local Hispano/Latino communities in their respective regions through educational programming and collaborations with various local organizations. Could the approach of NMMA and NHCC translate nationally? How does the American Latino Museum intend to engage and the overall Hispano/Latino communities nationally? How does it plan to build sustainable relationships with the community?

Representing the experiences of American Hispano/Latinos is a huge undertaking. The potential Smithsonian America Latino Museum requires a clear vision as to what it will present and whose voices it will project. Will the museum portray an image of American Latinos that addresses the prevailing issues of immigration, identity, health and politics or it will exhibit an image fixed in the past – meaning pre-Columbian times and themes of the conquest – that does not resonate with the experiences of various American Latino generations?

Several questions remain unanswered as the role of NMMA and NHCC is still unclear. The potential Smithsonian American Latino Museum will need to engage

existing Hispano/Latino organizations in order to acknowledge their existence and their contributions to the field. Otherwise, the exclusion of such organizations from the conversation will mirror the exclusion of Hispano/Latino artists from mainstream institutions. The challenges of NMMA and NHCC question whether the professional Latino arts field is ready to embrace another national museum, and does the Hispano/Latino have the inclination to support such institution.

Limitations

The staff interviews at NMMA and NHCC shed some light on the importance and need of ethnic/cultural institutions. Nevertheless, the first limitation of the study relates to the sample and sample size. The sample of the study was small which only included NMMA and NHCC. An insightful research with more depth would have required the inclusion of more organizations dedicated to Hispano/Latino culture and non-Hispano ethnic specific institutions. The inclusion of various ethnic specific institutions might have proven similar opportunities and challenges to those of which NMMA and NHCC have faced in the past couple of years.

In addition, the sample size at NHCC and NMMA was small; three staff members at each institution for a total of six. Schedule conflicts and unresponsiveness were factors in the small number of staff participation, for those reasons a wider range of participating institutions would offset a small sample size at each organization. In addition, the staff members that participated in the study were generally individuals in positions that work alongside the community. The study was from the perspective of the institutions and not the communities they represent. A comparison of viewpoints from the organization and

the community would have provided insightful information to measure the effective execution of the institutions mission. Since the institutions are national, different sample sizes throughout the country would have informed if NMMA and NHCC indeed engage audiences at a national level.

The above limitations affect the validity of the results – with a larger sample, appropriate representation of staff members from various departments, and the interviews with the members of the community the results may have portrayed a more accurate reflection of the value and importance of NMMA and NHCC.

Recommendations for the Future

The limitations outlined in the study may be minimized or eliminated by revising the sample size. In order to improve the data collection, data triangulation could be used to cross check the data. Staff members at each organization were interviewed to determine the organization's relationship with the community. Interviewing members of the community could validate the results of the interviews. This study did not measure community member satisfaction with the institutions. Future studies should employ a survey or interview procedure to measure the community's perceptions of the institutions.

Further research is needed to study the inactive arts participation of Hispano/Latinos. This research proved that ethnic specific organizations like NMMA and NHCC face the same challenges as mainstream institutions. As previously mentioned, Hispano/Latinos will not attend a museum because it was built for them. It would be interesting to compare Hispano/Latino arts participation in the United States of America with that of Hispano/Latino arts participation in Central and South America in an attempt

to answer ‘why Hispano/Latinos do not actively attend museums?’ Is it the museological approach? Is it context in which the art and culture is presented to the viewer?

NMMA and NHCC are located in predominantly Hispano/Latino communities. The redevelopment – gentrification – of both areas may pose a problem in the future for NMMA and NHCC if they are not prepared to respond to the changes of the external environment. Is the redevelopment of the areas a direct result from having arts and cultural institutions in the community? Americans for the Arts’ studies have revealed the economic impact of arts and culture in cities and communities; an argument used by many organizations when seeking funds from the local, state and federal government. Yet, organizations should be cautious of using such argument if the end result is a negative impact on the community such as gentrification. While gentrification is a strategy used to increase the quality of life of impoverished communities as it decreases crime and increases property values, prices and tax revenues; the consequence is the displacement of residents due to their inability to pay higher property taxes – a direct result from the increased property values. Thus, what are the implications of gentrification for the communities represented by NMMA and NHCC? Are they prepared to address the possible demographical changes in their areas for years to come? What happens when the community the museum is set to serve no longer exists?

Conclusion

Ethnic specific organizations developed from the under and misrepresentation of ethnic groups fundamental to American society. The exclusion of their contributions to the U.S. inaccurately portrays American culture and history. Ethnic specific institutions

are not created to further segregate the communities from the general population. Instead they are created to celebrate and discuss the community's identity as "American" while simultaneously maintaining their ethnic/racial background. NMMA and NHCC are important to the Hispano/Latino community because they provide a space to express, showcase and share their culture. Ethnic specific museums challenge the Western cultural canon ruling mainstream institutions, since ethnic art has long been labeled folk, craft, or primitive. The misrepresentation of Hispano/Latino art is due to the intricacies of a culture that is often generalized, thus resulting in stereotypical depictions.

NHCC evolved from the demand of artists and community leaders for a space to showcase Hispano art, culture and life. Similarly, NMMA evolved from the local need to preserve and present Mexican culture indicative of both sides of the border. Key to the success of arts and cultural institutions is building sustainable relationships with the community. Having an institution dedicated to Hispano/Latino culture is not enough, since Hispano/Latinos will not attend a museum simply because it was built for them. The functions of the museum, then, become an essential component of audience engagement. The first voice approach adopted by NMMA and NHCC allows the Hispano/Latino community to exhibit arts and culture from their perspective. However, institutions should question who controls the narrative that is exhibited in representation of the community as a whole.

Museums are not structural institutions simply created to collect and exhibit art. They have the ability to truly work with the community by responding to their needs. NMMA and NHCC have successfully engaged local Hispano/Latino communities in their respective regions through educational programming and collaborations with various

organizations. Providing a space and sharing the curatorial power with the community enables Hispano/Latinos to learn about themselves, affirm their identity and appreciate other cultures.

Representing the Hispano/Latino community along with all its complexities is a huge undertaking. While the need of a national American Latino Museum cannot be disputed, how does the institution intend to engage the overall Hispano/Latino community? Studies have found that Hispano/Latinos attend museums mainly to learn something new. Thus, exhibiting relevant information while challenging the community becomes important. While the commission recommends governing the museum under the Smithsonian Institution, has the commission thoroughly thought about the implications? Previous scenarios of censorship at the Smithsonian question the ability of the American Latino Museum to address controversial themes. Will the institution exhibit relevant information to the community or will the museum remain fixed in the past in an attempt to educate the general public about Hispano/Latino culture?

Various conversations have yet to take place in the Hispano/Latino arts field before it is ready to embrace another national institution. The field remains unclear as to how Hispano/Latinos spend their leisure time and its connection to arts participation. Hence, is the community not attending museums due to the context in which art is presented? NMMA and NHCC have successfully reached the Hispano/Latinos by responding to their needs and integrating the community into the museum, yet can their approach translate nationally? What approach will the potential Smithsonian American Latino Museum implement to reach a diverse audience? For that reason, the success of the Smithsonian American Latino Museum will depend on strong leadership and its

ability to collaborate with existing Hispano/Latino organizations. The collaboration between organizations will generate a network of support, thus resulting in a cohesive depiction of Hispano/Latino culture in order to avoid stereotypical representation.

NMMA, NHCC and several Hispano/Latino organizations throughout the country do not exist to portray Hispano/Latinos as victims. Ethnic specific organizations celebrate the cultural diversity of the U.S. and exist to fill the void mainstream institutions have failed to address. The nation's inability to celebrate cultural pluralism reinforces the need of ethnic specific organizations because the U.S. is a heterogeneous society even if it is not fully embraced or reflected in mainstream institutions.

APPENDIX A
SUBJECT RECRUITMENT

Date

Name of Subject

Organization Name

Address

City, State, Zip code

Dear Ms./Mr. *Subject's Name*:

My name is Maritza Bandera and I am a graduate student in the Arts Management program at American University, Washington, DC. I am currently working on my Master's Thesis, which looks at how the National Museum of Mexican Art, El Museo Latino and the National Hispanic Cultural Center engage the communities they serve while attracting and cultivating diverse audiences.

I would be grateful for the opportunity to interview you and members of your staff to explore issues of inclusion, participation and engagement. If you agree to participate in the study, I will interview you at your facility on a date between April 18th and June 18th of 2011. I will be contacting you to determine a convenient date and time. I will provide the questions and themes that will be addressed during the interview in advance.

If you have any questions about the research study, please do not hesitate to contact me directly at xxx.xxx.xxxx or via email at mb0487a@student.american.edu

Sincerely

Maritza Bandera

APPENDIX B

CONSENT FORM

Consent to Participate in Research

Identification of Investigators and Purpose of Study

You are being asked to participate in a research study conducted by Maritza Bandera from American University. The purpose of this study is to investigate how National Museum of Mexican Art, El Museo Latino and the National Hispanic Cultural Center engage their communities while attracting and cultivating diverse audiences. This study will contribute to the student's completion of her Master's thesis.

Research Procedures

Should you decide to participate in this research study, you will be asked to sign this consent form once all your questions have been answered to your satisfaction. This study consists of interviews that will be administered to individual participants in Chicago, Illinois; Omaha, Nebraska and Albuquerque, New Mexico. You will be asked to provide answers to a series of questions related to the organization's mission, founding, audience development, role in the community, and engagement with the community. The interview will be audio recorded.

Time Required

Participation in this study will require a maximum of 1 hours of your time.

Risks

The investigator does not perceive any risks from your involvement in this study. However, you have the right to not answer any question(s) if you believe the answer(s) will jeopardize the organization's reputation or yours personally.

Benefits

Potential benefits from participation in this study include; visibility of the organization to others, the development and importance of the organization to the community it serves and its role as a cultural institution in the USA. In addition, you will be able to tell stories relating to the organization's importance, mission and impact that may not necessarily be found on the organization's website or marketing materials. This research study gives the opportunity to tell the story about your organization that distinguishes it from other cultural institutions in the USA.

Confidentiality

The results of this research will be presented to colleagues and professors. The results of this project will reveal the identity of the participant(s) as the research study is dependent of the qualitative data collected from the interview. The researcher retains the right to use and publish identifiable data for academic purposes. All data will be stored in a secure location accessible only to the researcher. Upon completion of the study, all information that matches up individual respondents with their answers including audio tapes will be destroyed.

Participation & Withdrawal

Your participation is entirely voluntary. You are free to choose not to participate. Should you choose to participate, you can withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any individual question without consequences.

Questions about the Study

If you have questions or concerns during the time of your participation in this study, or after its completion or you would like to receive a copy of the final aggregate results of this study, please contact:

Maritza Bandera
Arts Management
American University
mb0487a@student.american.edu

Ximena Varela
Arts Management
American University
Telephone: (202)885-3883
varela@american.edu

Questions about Your Rights as a Research Subject

Dr. David Haaga
Chair, Institutional Review Board
American University
(202)885-1718
dhaaga@american.edu

Matt Zembrzusi
IRB Coordinator
American University
(202)885-3447
irb@american.edu

Giving of Consent

I have read this consent form and I understand what is being requested of me as a participant in this study. I freely consent to participate. I have been given satisfactory answers to my questions. The investigator provided me with a copy of this form. I certify that I am at least 18 years of age.

☐ I give consent to be audio taped during my interview. _____ (initials)

Name of Participant (Printed)

Name of Participant (Signed)

Date

Name of Researcher (Signed)

Date

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Were you an avid museumgoer as a child/young adult?
2. What is the best part of your job?
3. As an art (manager, founder, president, staff member), what is your responsibility to the community?
4. While some believe that having a National Museum of the American Latino as part of the Smithsonian Institution is controversial, what is your opinion about the potential museum? What role do you hope your organizations will play?
5. In today's political climate, the constant debate of immigration reform which directly affects various Latino communities throughout the country, what role does your organization play in the debate? Or what do you believe should be your role? Is it the organization's responsibility to advocate for the community?
6. What challenges has your organization faced in the last 3 or 5 years?
7. If I did not know anything about your organization; what would you tell me about the organization? What is the purpose?
8. In today's society, where the arts are seen as unimportant and State Arts Agencies are in jeopardy of extinction, how does the organization continue to express the importance of the services it offers?
9. Has there been collaboration(s) with other museums and/or arts organizations dedicated to Latino culture? Why or why not? If not, is there any interest to collaborate with other institutions?
10. Why build the museum in (Chicago, Omaha, and Albuquerque)? What was the need?
11. In what ways has the organization addressed issues of social inequality, disadvantage and discrimination?

12. How do you reconcile what the organization values with what the community values?
13. Why do you believe some groups, such as Latinos, have a track record of not attending art museums?
14. What steps has the organization taken to become a vital part of the lives of people/communities the organization has not served?
15. How do you define the community or communities the museum serves?
16. What need is the organization fulfilling that is not met by other institutions in the city?
17. What role can museums play in delivering benefits to specific, geographically defined communities?
18. How does the organization deter from the public's perception of museums being superior?
19. How do you engage new and rapidly changing communities?
20. How does the organization deal with controversies related to exhibitions and/or programming?
21. Have you dealt with a public protesting an exhibition or performance due to its content? How did the organization handle the situation?
22. How often does the organization assess the external environment, meaning the demographics of the community you serve?
23. How do you measure the impact of the organization in the community?
24. Who is your main audience?
25. Do you collect data or have information about the demographics of your audience?
26. Have you ever studied the organization's visitor experience?
27. How does your organization interact with the public?
28. What is the one thing you are not providing the community today that you are secretly longing for?

29. What is your vision for the organization for the next five years?

APPENDIX D

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